

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMCONSUL NAPLES

DIA WASHDC

USNATO MISSION 3554

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL FLORENCE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT, CH

SUBJ: BERLINGUER TAKES A SHOT AT THE CHINESE

REF: ROME 15191

1. ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTY (PCI) SECRETARY-GENERAL ENRICO BERLINGUER USED THE OCCASION OF A COMMUNIST PARTY FESTIVAL ON SEPT. 19 TO MAKE A MAJOR ADDRESS, REPORTED SEPTTEL. THE ADDRESS, DELIVERED IN NAPLES, INCLUDED A SECTION ON THE PRC WHICH MAY RAISE THE TEMPERATURE OF THE DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP AND THE PCI IN THE WAKE OF CHINESE REJECTION OF THE PCI'S NOTE OF CONDOLENCE ON MAO'S DEATH (SEE REFTEL).

2. WHILE ACKNOWLEDGING THAT MAO WAS ONE OF THE "PROTAGONISTS OF MODERN HISTORY" AND RENEWING THE PCI'S EXPRESSION OF CONDOLENCES, BERLINGUER PLACED THE CHINESE REVOLUTION IN THIRD PLACE, AFTER

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THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION AND "THE GREAT ANTI-FASCIST WAR,"

IN THE RANKING OF GREAT CONTEMPORARY EVENTS. HE WENT ON TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE PCI KNOWS LITTLE ABOUT THE "SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION" IN CHINA -- BUT ONLY BECAUSE THE PRC HAS CONSISTENTLY REJECTED THE PCI'S INITIATIVES AIMED AT REESTABLISHING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COMMUNIST PARTIES. DESPITE THIS, THE PCI RECOGNIZES THAT THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS HAVE ENRICHED THE SOCIALIST EXPERIENCE THROUGH A GREAT REVOLUTIONARY AND ANTI-COLONIAL STRUGGLE. PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT ARE CHINESE CONTRIBUTIONS TO RELATIONS BETWEEN THE INDUSTRIAL WORKER AND PEASANT CLASSES AND IN THE FIGHT AGAINST BUREAUCRATIC SOCIALISM.

3. THESE POSITIVE ELEMENTS NOTWITHSTANDING, IT IS IMPORTANT, SAID BERLINGUER, TO COMBAT A MYTHIC VISION AND ACRITICAL EXALTATION OF THE CHINESE REVOLUTIONARY EXPERIENCE AND OF THE FIGURE OF MAO. BERLINGUER CALLED ATTENTION TO SHARP CONTRADICTIONS, UNREASONABLE CHANGES OF POSITIONS AND DRAMATIC CONTRASTS IN THE ECONOMIC AND INTERNAL POLITICAL POLICIES OF THE PRC. HE CRITICIZED ASPECTS OF CHINESE FOREIGN POLICY, ESPECIALLY WITH REGARD TO CHILE AND ANGOLA BUT CONDEMNED MOST STRONGLY CHINESE HOSTILITY TOWARD INTERNATIONAL DETENTE.

4. COMMENT. WHILE CONTINUING TO PROCLAIM PCI INDEPENDENCE OF ALL FOREIGN MODELS, RUSSIAN AS WELL AS CHINESE, BERLINGUER ATTACKED THE PRC ON EXACTLY THOSE ISSUES WHERE THE CHINESE AND RUSSIANS DISAGREE. HIS ROUGH HANDLING OF THE PERSON AND LEGACY OF MAO WOULD SEEM TO GUARANTEE CONTINUED NON-COMMUNICATION BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND ITALIAN COMMUNIST PARTIES. END COMMENT. VOLPE

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